N° 80. SATURDAY, *Auguſt* 12, 1786.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

Dic mihi cras iſtud, Poſthume, quando venit?

MART.

SIR,

I Flatter myſelf you will not think me unworthy of your correſpondence. Moſt of the members of my family have taken the liberty of communicating the particulars of their ſituation, or of praying redreſs of their grievances from the authors of the periodical works of the time; and a certain dark-complexioned relation of mine has had a petition to yourſelf laid before the public in your 53d number. I think, Mr. Lounger, I may ſay without much arrogance, I am not leſs deſerving of your favour than her. She, I know, pretends to have ſometimes aſſiſted you in your labours; but it is to me you look for their reward.

Of that relation, Mr. Lounger, ſince I have mentioned her, I may firſt complain. She was naturally of a ſerious and rather melancholy

cast. But of late a fashionable life has quite altered her disposition. She has become intolerably light-headed, gay, as her friends call it, and allows her affairs to get into the greatest confusion and disorder; all of which it falls upon me to re-establish and put to rights again. Her gaiety, when carried the ridiculous length to which in town she frequently pushes it, is the occasion of much sadness to me; her festivity gives me many a headach; her extravagance has frequently threatened me with a jail; and her impertinence brought me in danger of my life.

I am, generally speaking, indeed, the most unfortunate person in the world in regard to my predecessors. They got a thousand things upon trust, which they have left me to answer for. With all ranks and conditions of men, I am constantly the Scape-goat for every thing that is amiss, the Bail for all misdemeanors, the Security in all obligations. My burdens are now become so intolerable, that I am resolved (through your channel, if you will allow me) to rid myself of them at once, and to take out a *Commission of Bankruptcy* in the Lounger. What sort of division my circumstances will allow, you will please signify to the principal classes of my creditors in your next paper.

Tell

Tell ſuch of them as may look for me at court, that I do not hold myſelf bound for above one ſhilling in the pound of the promiſes and notes of hand of my anceſtors. With ſome people in place there, I have pretty long accounts to ſettle; but to theſe I know they do not pay much attention, for a very good reaſon indeed, that the balance is generally againſt them.

Let that claſs who frequent courts of law know, that I will not pretend to clear above a tenth part of the incumbrances that are there laid upon me. In all the courts, I muſt leave the other nine parts to be ſettled by my ſucceſſors. In chancery, I don't know whether my great-great-grandſon will be able to diſcharge them.

Be ſo kind as acquaint the Projectors of various denominations, who are ſo deep in my books, that I cannot anſwer above one in a thouſand of the draughts they will probably make upon me. Nay, I will frankly tell them, that it is likely they may loſe more than even the money they were made to advance for me. But as moſt of them expected uſurious intereſt, their loſſes do not touch me very nearly.

I muſt inform thoſe Lovers who have truſted me, that they are of all my creditors the moſt likely to be offended with me. They are indeed in a very ſingular ſituation with regard to the ſecurities of mine in their poſſeſſion. If they

receive payment, it is a hundred to one but they will be undone by it.

My bonds to Beauties muſt ſuffer a very great diſcount. They are indeed of ſuch a nature that preſcription ſoon bars them; and moſt of them are ſo conceived, that coverture or marriage in the obligee renders them abſolutely void.

Authors will be often diſappointed in the claims they pretend to have upon me. I never receive a fiftieth part of the books that modern writers deſire their bookſellers to ſend me. In order, however, to conciliate your favour, Sir, I will give you my promiſe (though it is but fair to confeſs that I ſometimes forget my promiſes), that the *Lounger* ſhall make one of my library.

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

TO-MORROW.

I HAVE lately received ſeveral letters on the ſubject of the Stage, and among others, one ſigned *Nerva*, cenſuring in very ſtrong terms that boiſterous and noiſy kind of applauſe which, in the midſt of the moſt affecting paſſages of a tragedy, the bulk of a Britiſh audience are diſpoſed to indulge in. It ſeems to have been written during the time of *Mrs. Pope*'s late performance in our theatre, whoſe tones of pity and of tenderneſs, my correſpondent complains, were often

often interrupted or rendered inaudible by the drumming of ſticks and the clapping of hands in the pit and gallery. He was the more ſtruck with the impropriety, he ſays, from his being accompanied by a gentleman, a native of Italy, though enough a proficient in our language to underſtand the play. He deſcribes "the ſur-"priſe and horror of the ſuſceptible *Albani*," (ſo it ſeems the ſtranger is called) accuſtomed as he had been to the decorum of the Italian ſtage, to find, inſtead of ſilent and involuntary tears, the roar and riot with which our audience received the moſt pathetic ſpeeches of one of the beſt of our tragedies.

"On Sunday," continues my correſpondent, "Albani and I went to church. The plainneſs "of the edifice, and the ſimplicity of our wor-"ſhip, ſtruck him much; yet he was pleaſed "with the decency which prevailed, and charmed "with the diſcourſe." "I am ſurpriſed," ſaid he, as we walked home, "that ſo elegant "a preacher is not a greater favourite with the "public."——"You are miſtaken," I replied, "he has long been their favourite."—"Nay," ſaid he, "do not tell me ſo; you ſaw they "did not give him a ſingle mark of applauſe "during the whole diſcourſe, nor even at the "end."—"I laughed, Mr. Lounger, and ſo "perhaps will you; but I believe you will find "it

"it difficult to assign any good reason, why "silence, attention, and tears, which are thought "ample approbation in the one place, should be "held insufficient in the other; or why that "boisterous applause which is thought so ho-"nourable in the Theatre, should be thought a "disgrace to merit in the Pulpit or at the Bar."

I cannot however perfectly agree with my correspondent in this last observation. At the Bar, indeed, the clapping of hands, and the beating the floor with people's sticks, might do well enough; but at the Bar it is a rule, never to make a noise for nothing. In the Church, not to mention the indecency of the thing, disturbances of that kind are perfectly averse to the purpose for which many grave and good Christians go thither.

In the Playhouse, besides the prescriptive right which the audience have now acquired to this sort of freedom, I think that part of the house by which it is commonly exercised have much to plead in its defence. The boxes frequently contrive to drown the noise of the stage, and it is but fair that the pit and gallery should in their turn drown the noise of the boxes.

My correspondent seems to allow this sort of applause at the representation of Comedy, or at least of Farce; and indeed I am inclined to think, that in some of our late Farces, a very moral

moral uſe may be made of it, as the leſs that is heard of them by the boxes the better. The cudgels of the audience, of the barbarity of which Nerva complains ſo warmly, cannot be better employed, except perhaps they could be applied to recompenſe the merit of the author, inſtead of the talents of the actors. Moral writers on the ſubject of the Stage uſed to vent their reproaches againſt the Comic authors of the laſt age, who mixed ſo much indecency with their wit. The cenſure does not exactly apply to the *petite piece* writers of our days; for they keep ſtrictly to the unity of compoſition, and mix no wit with their indecency. I fairly confeſs, that I have been obliged to abate ſomewhat of the ſeverity of my former opinion with regard to the wicked wits of the old ſchool, and am content to go back to *Wycherley* and *Congreve*, having always thought, with my friend Colonel Cauſtic, that if one muſt ſin, it is better to ſin like a gentleman. Beſides, a very dull or a very innocent perſon may poſſibly miſs the alluſion of a free ſpeech, when it is covered with the veil of wit or of irony. But the good things of our modern Farce-mongers have nothing of diſguiſe about them; the diſhes they are pleaſed to ſerve up to us are not garlicked ragouts, but ragouts of garlic. I was much pleaſed with the anſwer which I heard a plain country-gentleman

give

give to another in the pit ſome weeks ago, who obſerved to him, that the farce was droll and laughable enough, but that there was a good deal of *double entendre* in it. I don't know what you may think *double*, ſaid he in reply; but in my mind, it was as plain *ſingle entendre* as ever I heard in my life.

V.